

# CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

At Edwards, the mission and the natural environment go hand-in-hand. The unique physical environment makes the high desert an ideal place for flight test activities. Helping the flight testers maintain access to the air, land and water for testing and other operations—while not upsetting the delicate balance of the desert ecosystem—is the mission of the Environmental Management Office.

To effectively accomplish its mission, Environmental Management has adopted a four-pillar approach. Appropriate personnel are consulted during the planning and implementation stages of all test programs and construction projects at Edwards. The four pillars are:

- **Cleanup:** The identification, investigation, management and cleanup of hazardous waste sites is aimed at protecting human health and the environment.
- **Conservation:** Environmental assessments are provided for test programs and construction projects to survey potential impact. Efforts to manage the protection and preservation of natural resources and cultural and historic sites at Edwards also fall within the conservation pillar.
- **Pollution Prevention:** Processes are developed to minimize the use of hazardous material, the generation of hazardous waste and the deposition of solid waste in a landfill. Pillar efforts emphasize reuse and recycling programs.
- **Compliance:** Air quality, water quality, hazardous waste, aboveground and underground storage tanks, and special programs concerning issues such as asbestos and lead-based paint are monitored, measured and carefully managed. Compliance personnel help base organizations select, design and install low-emission equipment, as well as with application for and maintenance of permits. The goal of compliance is to meet and satisfy all applicable environmental laws, rules and regulations.

Base environmental personnel dedicated to all four pillars actively work with regulatory agencies and the community in a spirit of cooperation and commitment to ensure the Air Force Flight Test Center and its associates accomplish the mission while respecting the environment.

Protecting the environment at Edwards includes recreational activities. Riding motorcycles and three- and four-wheel all-terrain cycles is allowed, but only in designated areas and only after participants have completed desert tortoise training. Riders must stay on existing trails and must not pick up any cultural, historic or prehistoric artifacts they find. Leave them where they were found and notify Environmental Management.

*The desert tortoise, listed by both the federal government and California as a threatened species, is native to the Mojave Desert and Edwards. Biologists actively manage the base's desert tortoise population. Because the species is protected, anyone who causes harm to a desert tortoise is subject to heavy fines and penalties.*

## Supporting Edwards Air Force Base Through Sound Environmental Stewardship

*Rogers (pictured here, background) and Rosamond dry lakebeds are two unique natural resources that help make Edwards the site of the premier flight test facility. The lakebeds are among the lowest points in the Antelope Valley and collect personal rain and snow runoff from surrounding hills and also from the San Gabriel Mountains to the south and the Tehachapi Mountains to the west. At one time the lakebeds contained water year-round, but changing weather patterns have caused the surfaces to be void of vegetation and contain water only after infrequent rains and snow falls.*

